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# BREAKING THE PATTE

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## ABUSE

FEB 26 1992
EDMONTON

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

This is one of a series of booklets called *Breaking the Pattern*. It was developed by and for Alberta citizens, to help address the problem of family violence in Alberta.

Several hundred Albertans contributed ideas, experience and materials, in the hope they could help people in their own and other communities.

In that spirit of helpful cooperation, readers are encouraged to photocopy and distribute any or all portions of this booklet.

Copies are available free of charge from:

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# BREAKING THE PATTERN: UNDERSTANDING WIFE ABUSE

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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to help you understand the problem of wife abuse:

- how and why it happens,
- what happens to people in abusive relationships,
- how society may contribute to the problem.

You may want to understand the problem because it is affecting you personally, or someone close to you . . .

OR

. . . you may want to understand the problem so that you can take action in your community to change attitudes and help those suffering from abuse.

At the back of this booklet is a list of resources from around the province that will help you know what is available to assist persons in abusive situations.

When you feel ready to take community action, you will find another booklet in this series helpful. It is entitled *Breaking the Pattern: How Alberta Communities Can Help.* Included in that booklet is resource information of use to individuals and community organizations.

Note: this booklet deals mainly with wife abuse. The term "wife abuse" is used to mean any woman who is or has been living with a man in an intimate relationship, whether legally married or not.

The same cycle can also apply to dating relationships.

## A. A DEFINITION

In this booklet, we use the terms "family violence" and "abusive relationships" interchangeably. Often violent or abusive behavior is called "battering," which is defined as

***"assaultive behavior between adults in an intimate, sexual, usually cohabitating relationship."***

Assaultive behavior can take many forms. All forms of abusive behavior are ways in which one human being is trying to control or have power over another. These behaviors can include but are not limited to:

**Emotional or psychological abuse:**
put-downs, constant criticism; breaking down partner's belief system (cultural or religious); making partner watch children or pets be abused and not allowing partner to intervene.

**Isolation:**
denying the partner access to or the opportunity to keep friends, social contacts, outside interests; jealousy; making family contact difficult.

**Intimidation:**
threats to hurt or kill children, pets, friends; destruction of property; controlling partner's talk; making partner account for every minute, every action; threats to hurt anyone who helps her; threats to prove partner is an unfit mother; threats of suicide; controlling with fear.

**Economic abuse:**
allowing partner no money of her own or no opportunity to improve her earning capacity; forcing partner to hand over every penny, whether or not she earns money; forcing partner to account for every cent.

**Physical abuse:**
pushing, shoving, slapping, punching, kicking, breaking bones, knifing, shooting or use of other weapons, locking out of one's home, abandoning in an unsafe place, murder.

**Sexual abuse:**
forced unwanted sex; demanding that partner wear more (or less) provocative clothing; forced sex with objects, friends, animals; insisting that partner act out pornographic fantasies, denial of partner's sexuality.

## B. Profile of a Violent Relationship

If we're going to help those in violent relationships, we need to understand their situations.

But sometimes we shy away from stories of violence between husbands and wives, because the stories may seem so extreme or shocking, or so far from our own experience. It may be hard to imagine how a loving relationship could deteriorate to the point of violence.

And yet, as we come to understand abusive relationships, we may see that the sources of violence are not so far from any of us. Violent incidents do not occur in a vacuum. Though each abusive relationship is unique, common patterns do occur.

The following example is a composite of many stories. We tell this story to illustrate how a violent relationship can happen:

### 1. Courtship

She could be a teenager in an oppressive home situation or an independent woman developing a career.

She may be attracted to him because he seems strong, exciting or romantic. He may be attracted to her because she seems fragile and in need of protection, or because she seems glamorous and independent. They may have a strong sexual attraction.

He may be jealous or possessive of her. She may find this flattering, believing his jealousy is a sign he really loves her.

Though either or both of them may seem confident, it's likely that inside they are unsure of themselves. They may have low self-esteem. Either or both of them may have experienced violence as a child. Almost certainly, being together fills a need for each of them.

## 2. COMMITMENT

At some point, they become a "couple." Whether legally married or living together, they take on the traditional roles of husband and wife.

He expects her to be "a good wife" who accommodates his needs and cares for him. She wants to be "a good wife" - one who pleases her husband.

Though she may be assertive in some situations, in her relationship with him she slips into a more passive role, perhaps appreciating that she now has someone to care about her. They may both believe, though they may not be aware of it, that the wife is responsible for the happiness of the household.

He is dependent on her for emotional support, to create a loving environment, to make him feel masculine. She is dependent on him to take charge, to be the dominant one, to make her feel feminine. She may become financially dependent on him.

They meet each other's needs for a while. Their mutual dependence draws them together and they want to be happy with their relationship.

## 3. TENSION

Things begin to go sour. There may be an outside source of pressure – trouble at work or financial pressure. He may begin to drink heavily. Often, the couple's first pregnancy changes the tone of their relationship.

She has a harder time anticipating what he wants. He feels cheated: a man's home is his castle and the castle is not measuring up. He may believe that you have to keep wives in line. He begins to attack her verbally – with insults, put-downs, name calling, accusations.

She may begin to feel inadequate, like she's failed him in some way. Emotionally, she begins to feel she's walking on a tightrope. She tries harder to be "a good wife."

He may begin to check on her, to control where she goes and who she sees. The mind games begin – or escalate.

She is hurt and confused. She tries harder still to please him – maybe making special meals, maybe wearing different clothes or make up. The harder she tries, the less he respects her. The more he blames her, the more she blames herself. He is not pleased, so there must be something wrong with her.

As he becomes more critical and more oppressive, she may become more passive and less sure of herself. Or, she may try fighting back – also becoming critical and verbally abusive.

He responds by increasing the abuse, exercising more control and intimidation. She feels more guilty and inadequate. Her confidence is shattered.

Sometimes, not always, she becomes less able to handle other situations in her life, such as a job or dealing with the couple's children. Her bottled up feelings of guilt and shame, her sense of feeling powerless and inadequate, may transfer themselves to other circumstances.

The tension escalates. This pattern may continue for months or years. However long it lasts, it is devastating to her emotional health.

## 4. THE FIRST INCIDENT OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

During an argument, he hits her. They are both shocked.

He begs forgiveness and promises it will never happen again. He doesn't know what got into him – pressure at work, or maybe a little too much to drink.

She agrees with him. Surely if he loved her he wouldn't hit her. He didn't mean it. Not really. They both want to believe it was an accident – a one-time thing.

He is kind and loving, more loving than he has been for months. Once again they experience tenderness and passion, more intense in the wake of their violent emotions. The magic is back.

They do not discuss the incident. They do not want to believe it happened, so it didn't. Why take a chance on spoiling their fragile harmony?

The intensity of their emotion and their mutual denial draw them closer, making them even more dependent on one another.

But a barrier has been broken.

## 5. IT HAPPENS AGAIN . . . AND AGAIN

Their emotional closeness begins to deteriorate. Tension begins to build again. The insults and accusations start; she tries harder to anticipate his moods and reactions.

*"They both maintain their cloak of shame and silence."*

Another explosive incident. This time they are not so shocked when he attacks her.

Again he is contrite and loving. He says what she wants to hear. She wants and needs it to be true, so she believes him. Again, they feel closer for a while – another "honeymoon" stage of tenderness and loving, entrapping them further.

The cycle repeats itself more frequently; tension build-up, violent explosion and the honeymoon.

At this point, she probably doesn't consider herself an abused woman. The reality hurts too much to admit, so she

denies it. Instead, she feels guilty, tries to accommodate him (she can't), tries to make the honeymoon last (it doesn't). In between his physical attacks, the emotional battering continues.

They both make excuses for him: he's had an unhappy childhood, he's under pressure these days, it's only when he's drinking.

They both maintain their cloak of shame and silence. They don't want anyone to know what goes on behind their closed doors. She's been told (or learned by trying) that she'd better not tell anyone what's happening.

Ironically, the worse the situation gets, the more they are both cut off from other people, and the more dependent they are on each other.

## 6. THE PATTERN IS SET

The cycle continues: tension build up, violent explosion, honeymoon. The violent incidents become more serious and more frequent and the honeymoons are shorter.

By now, their tenderness and affection happen only briefly during the honeymoon periods, if at all.

Once the tenderness made her believe he cared about her, now it may feel like another violation. And though he once kept her with promises "It will never happen again", now he may use threats "I'll kidnap the children."

Her anxiety and guilt turn to more fear. She doesn't know when the next attack will happen, or why. Her self-esteem drops lower still. She blames herself because she can't control the situation. She feels helpless and powerless, ashamed and humiliated.

*"She knows with certainty there will be an explosion sooner or later."*

She begins to believe maybe she deserves the assaults. And he continues to blame her, too – with insults, name-calling and put-downs.

Maybe if she could be a better wife he wouldn't be so angry. But sometimes he is good to her; he really is a good man; he really does love her. Maybe this time the emotional closeness will last.

And then one day she thinks, "He doesn't hit me because he's drunk, he drinks for an excuse to hit me."

Sometimes when he walks in the door she knows it's going to be a bad night. As a survival tactic, she may provoke fights, unconsciously wanting to speed up the cycle so they can get the violence over with.

He accuses her of pushing him to violence. Sometimes she does – as a way to end the unbearable tension for a while. The physical abuse may be easier to tolerate than the emotional and verbal abuse that comes before.

She knows with certainty there will be an explosion sooner or later. If it's sooner, maybe it won't be so violent.

Outsiders may feel that one or the other of them causes the violence. In reality, they are both locked into the cycle of violence.

## 7. Coming and Going

Something breaks the cloak of silence. Perhaps she needs medical attention, or neighbors call the police, or she is afraid for the children and talks to someone. Their violence becomes public.

Now begins the most frustrating stage for those who are trying to help. Outsiders do not understand how powerful the cycle of violence is, or how strong the couple's bond to one another.

Outsiders may think she's a bad wife – if she changed, the abuse would stop. Or, outsiders may see that he hurts her and she goes back to him. Trying to help the couple may seem futile.

She cannot leave because she needs to believe in the times he is good to her; because she fears his threats; because she does not see any options.

By now, she is a pulverized human being. She may drink or take pills to blot out the pain. She feels worthless, unlovable, humiliated. She does not believe she could make it on her own, or that she can escape the campaign of terror.

In their pain, one or both of the adults may inflict the same kinds of emotional or physical degradation on their children that they inflict on each other. She fears that if an outsider finds out about the abuse, the children will be taken away.

*"They are trapped in their violent relationships."*

What is less obvious is that, even though he may blame her, beneath his aggressive exterior the abuser feels worthless and unlovable too. He cannot imagine being without her. He needs her emotional support, yet is good to her only when he fears losing her.

She knows he only has her to talk to. She understands him – she senses his loneliness and sadness under all the bluster.

Some moments she hates and fears him. Other moments she feels sorry for how vulnerable he is.

He does everything in his power to drive her away – verbal attacks, beating her, sexual assault, hitting the children, and then everything in his power to get her back – "I'll go for counselling, I'll quit drinking, you have no right to break up our family, I need you, you'd starve without me, I'll never hit you again, I'll find you and kill you."

Outsiders find it hard to understand that their need for each other is as powerful as their need to break away. They are trapped in their violent relationship. He is compelled to drive her away and win her back; she must leave and return. Most likely, they will advance and retreat several times before they can change the cycle of violence.

But each time she leaves and returns, there is more danger. The next incident is likely to be more violent and outside helpers more likely to have given up on both of them.

## 8. CAN THE CYCLE BE BROKEN?

There are three ways the cycle of violence can be broken:

- ***He learns to stop being abusive.***

This can happen if he is willing to recognize that his behavior is abusive, if he can find the right kind of help, if he really wants to change his behavior, if he fears losing his family or being in trouble with the law, if there is enough attraction and motivation left between the partners.

Once the cycle has become established, abusers almost never stop their abusive behavior without external pressure or help.

- ***She leaves.***

This will happen if she comes to believe the abuse will never end; if she is more terrified of staying than leaving; if she realizes the harm being done to her children and herself; if she finds sufficient outside support to make it on her own.

- ***One of them dies.***

Sometimes the abuse escalates to a fatal level.

Between 1974 and 1987, 40 percent of all homicide cases in Canada involved family members and 37 percent were cases in which men killed their wives or common-law partners.

Unfortunately, some women become so desperate that they see killing their partners or themselves as their only way out. No one knows how many suicides can be attributed to desperation as a result of wife abuse.

## C. An historical perspective

Wife abuse is not new. It is centuries old.

- In 2500 B.C. if a wife talked back to her husband, he could engrave her name on a brick and use the brick to hit her.
- Wife beating and wife killing were rights of Greek and Roman men.
- In the middle ages, church and state accepted that a wife was the property of her husband. Wives could be bought and sold, and they could be burned at the stake for scolding, nagging or talking back to their husbands.
- In the eighteenth century, a British court ruled that a husband could beat his wife, so long as the stick he used was no thicker than his thumb.
- In the nineteenth century, a judge stated, "If no permanent injury has been inflicted . . . by the husband, it is better to draw the curtain, shut out the public gaze and leave the parties to forget and forgive."

  Even in the twentieth century, the judge's instruction to "draw the curtain" has been followed by many who could change.

But attitudes are changing, and the changed attitudes are being reflected in our laws:

- In 1968, for the first time in Canada, a spouse could be granted a divorce because of cruelty.
- In 1983, for the first time in Canada, a husband could be charged with sexually assaulting his wife.
- Also in 1983, police forces across the country were instructed to lay charges of assault against offenders in cases of "domestic dispute" when there was evidence an assault had taken place. Previously, it had been the victim's responsibility to lay charges.
- In 1990, Alberta's Solicitor General reinforced the instruction that police should lay assault charges against wife abusers.

In the past few decades Canadians, including Albertans, have expressed increasing concern about wife abuse. Alberta was the first province to have a women's emergency shelter, developed by volunteers. There are now numerous community groups working in various ways to reduce family violence in Alberta.

As well, public officials are expressing their concern. For example, the issue has been discussed in the Alberta Legislature many times during the last few years.

In 1990, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women made a declaration outlining the seriousness of violence against women and supporting efforts to achieve a society free from violence.

These expressions of concern are encouraging. It means our society and our province will no longer tolerate the abuse of women by their partners.

**As one Alberta M.L.A. said in the legislature, "No civilized society can allow some of its members to beat other weaker members without consequence."**

## THE LAKE LOUISE DECLARATION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

We, the Ministers responsible for the status of women in Canada, are committed to achieving full equality for women in all aspects of life. As Canadians, we value the inherent worth and dignity of every individual and we expect all persons to treat one another with respect. Since violence and its threat are depriving many women of their ability to achieve equality, we declare that:

1. Violence against women is a crime and punishable under the law.
2. Women are entitled to live in a safe environment.
3. Offenders must be held accountable for their behaviour.
4. The elimination of violence against women requires a response including prevention, public education, services and enforcement of the law.
5. Every individual, community and government in Canada must do everything possible to help the women, children and families affected by violence; we must all work together to achieve a society free from violence.

Thursday, May 31, 1990

## D. Some figures

Though there is room for encouragement, we have a way to go. Wife abuse is still unfortunately common.

*Battered But Not Beaten: Preventing Wife Abuse in Canada,* published in 1987, estimates that:

> **1 in 8 Canadian women living with a male partner experiences some kind of abuse.**

Statistics Canada (1986) estimates that 578,000 Alberta women are legally married or living with a male partner. This means:

> **There are potentially more than 72,000 abused women in Alberta.**

In 1990, over 200 women's shelters operated in Canada, 15 of them in Alberta. More shelters, short-term refuges and second-stage housing facilities are being developed.

Alberta records show more than 3,000 women and 4,000 children use Alberta's women's shelters every year. Almost 90 percent of women using shelters bring children with them.

Professionals who work with family violence realize that more treatment programs are needed for men. Some batterers in Alberta do receive treatment, but more programs are required.

## E. Some facts

Wife abuse is a fact of life in families across Canada. Women are kicked, punched, beaten, burned, threatened, knifed and shot, not by strangers, but by the men they live with. In every neighborhood, women are emotionally and physically abused by their husbands and lovers.

Some other facts:

- **Wife abuse is common in rural areas as well as in cities.**

Unfortunately for rural women, it is much more difficult for them to escape their situations because there may be no place to go, or no way to get there.

- **Wife abuse is common in high income as well as low income families.**

However, low income women are more likely to use facilities such as women's shelters. Middle and upper income women are less likely to admit they are abused and more likely to use resources other than shelters.

- **Wife abuse spans all ages, races and nationalities.**

Shelter workers report that more teenagers who have been abused by their boyfriends and more elderly women are coming to the shelters. Some newly discovered cases of elder abuse are actually cases of wife abuse that have been going on for years.

Studies of women using shelters in Canada indicate that more aboriginal women and immigrant women are beginning to report abuse.

Immigrant and some aboriginal women face serious language and cultural barriers which make reaching out very difficult. Immigrant women may also fear being deported for "making trouble" if they come forward.

- **Disabled women who are abused face many difficulties.**

Leaving abusive situations may be even more difficult for women who are disabled in ways that limit their mobility or ability to communicate.

These women are also vulnerable to abuse from their caretakers and may have few options open to them.

- **Wife abuse is rarely a one-time occurrence.**

Each incident reduces the abuser's internal control and makes it more likely that another incident will occur. Thus, the more it happens, the more likely it is to happen again.

- **Beatings are frequently severe.**

In about one-third of cases, medical treatment is required. Injuries include bruises, lacerations, fractures, burns, dislocations, scalds. Women have been attacked with fists, boots, broken bottles, knives, razors, belt buckles.

- **Wife abuse frequently happens after hours.**

Seventy per cent of reported assaults occur between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. About half of the incidents occur on weekends.

- **Most wife abuse happens in private places.**

Most cases occur in the family home, the kitchen and the master bedroom being the most dangerous rooms. When wife assaults occur outside the home, they usually take place where help is non-existent, for example in cars. Even if there are onlookers, they may think they shouldn't interfere.

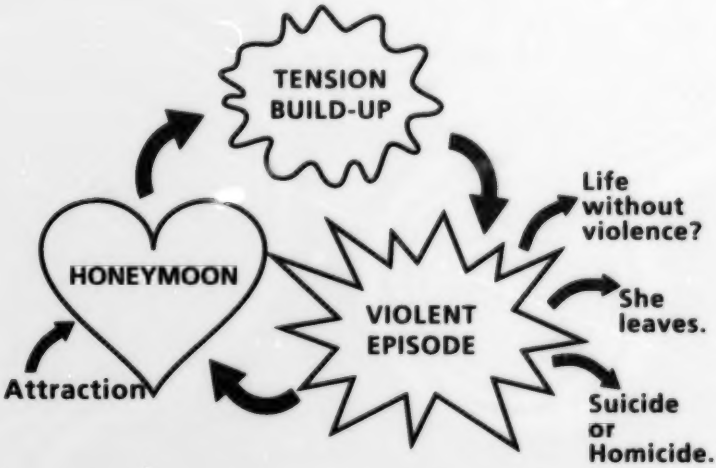
- **Wife abuse often occurs during pregnancy.**

Several researchers identify that physical abuse often starts during the couple's first pregnancy.

## ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

### A. THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Physical abuse usually follows a definite cycle. Understanding this cycle is important in learning to help those in abusive relationships. The cycle of violence helps explain why she stays.




### 1. TENSION BUILDING

He attacks her verbally with insults, put-downs, accusations. He tries to control her behavior through interrogation, isolation, intimidation.

Minor battering incidents occur. She tries to calm him, trying to anticipate his wishes.

As tension builds, she may become more passive or she may try to fight back. He becomes more oppressive. She blames herself for not being able to control the situation; she feels helpless. Tension becomes unbearable.

## 2. Acute Battering Incident

Tensions erupt into violence. The incident may be triggered by an external event or internal state of the man, but he will usually blame it on the woman's behavior. It is during this stage that the woman is most likely to be sexually assaulted, injured or killed.

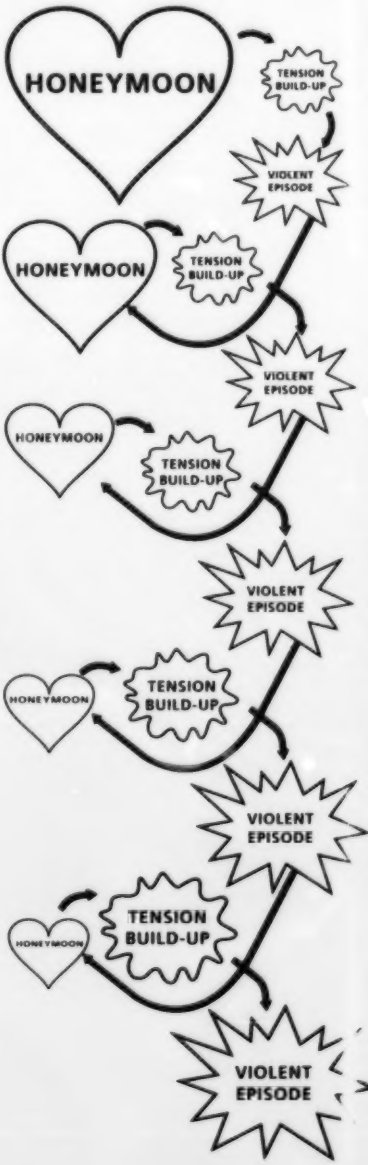
## 3. Honeymoon/Contrite Stage

After the acute battering incident, the man may become loving, kind and contrite. He may beg forgiveness and promise it will never happen again.

As their relationship deteriorates, his loving behavior is increasingly important to her. For a time, he seems like the man she fell in love with. Guilt also holds her. They may both believe she is responsible for his future welfare, or, if she leaves, for breaking up the home.

If she stays, it is not long before the loving behavior gives way to tension and small battering incidents. *A new cycle of violence begins.*

Over time, the cycle of violence shifts. Honeymoon periods become shorter and may disappear. Some who work with those in abusive relationships say "indifference" becomes a phase of the cycle. Tension and violence increase, and promises are replaced by threats.



## B. What kind of men abuse their wives?

### Letter from an Abusing Husband

When I was a kid, the man was the head of the household. My father made us stay in line and if we stepped out of line he knocked us back in. It was good for us. We grew up to respect authority.

When I got married, I figured my job was to be the head of the household. That's the way my wife wanted it too. Now she says we should go for counselling to talk about our problems. I told her she can go for counselling if she has a problem. Why should I go? I don't have a problem.

I don't understand why people don't respect authority anymore. It used to be the boss was the boss, but people don't respect the boss anymore. Even at work, I can't just tell people what they're supposed to do anymore – they tell me to "consult" my employees.

I guess that's why I get so mad at my wife and kids. If a man can't control his own family, he's nothing. If my wife and kids would just smarten up, I wouldn't have to get mad.

Sometimes I guess I get a little carried away. Once my wife said if I didn't mean to do it how come I only hit her where the bruises wouldn't show. She got a bruise that showed and she never said that again. She should've known better than to make me lose my temper.

My wife says she wants to leave. In the old days, women didn't talk like that, they respected their husbands. Maybe she **should** go for counselling if it would straighten her out.

Sometimes she acts like she's almost afraid of me. Doesn't she know I love her? She's the only person I've ever been close to. I don't know what I'd do without her.

She wouldn't dare leave. I'd track her down and she'd be sorry she ever tried to get away. She knows it, too. She knows who's boss.

Most men who abuse their wives grew up believing that a man should be the head of the household, that his needs and wants are most important and that he should be the ultimate authority in the family.

They believe they are responsible for their wives and children; that they own them and therefore have the right – even the duty – to control them. If control cannot be achieved by will or words, violence is used.

Somewhere they learned that violence is appropriate and that it works for them. It ends arguments and allows them to have their way. They may have learned this as children watching their fathers abuse their mothers, or they may have learned while growing up that being male means being aggressive.

These basic beliefs are usually combined with some or all of the following characteristics.

- **Limited awareness of feelings and how to express them**

Most unpleasant feelings are experienced or interpreted as anger. The men have not learned to recognize, acknowledge or express such feelings as sadness, fear or disappointment.

They believe violence is a natural way to express their anger. Some seem to know no other way to behave when they are angry, although they are selective about where and on whom they vent their anger.

Some say their behavior is beyond their control. Others seem to know exactly what they are doing and are careful to hit their victims where the bruises and lacerations will not show.

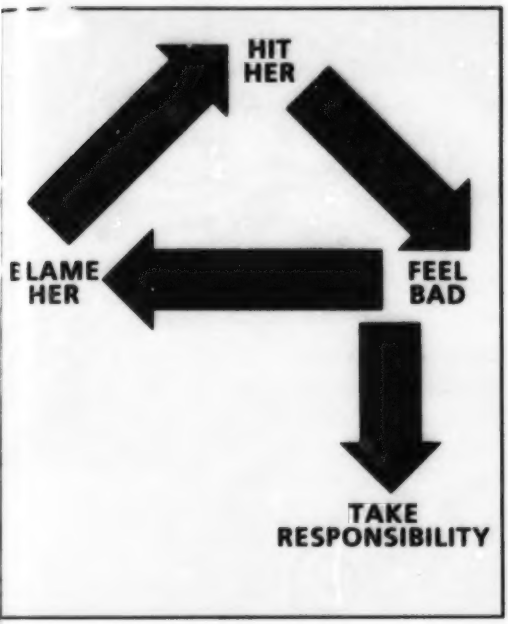
- **Deny responsibility**

Many of the men do not believe the problem is theirs. They blame overwork or stress or alcohol or drugs. They may deny – even to themselves – that the violence happened.

Intoxication is a factor in many violent incidents. It doesn't "cause" violence, but it can lower inhibitions making it easier to be abusive. It can also contribute to making the violence worse.

Often, arresting, charging and prosecuting offenders is necessary to make them realize that society holds them responsible for their actions.

## TAKING RESPONSIBILITY




Almost never will an abuser take responsibility for his actions without some kind of external pressure, such as the possibility of jail, or losing his family completely. ("I'm only doing this because I want my wife to come home.")

Even then, an abuser may be in treatment for a lengthy period of time before he begins to really understand the process and wants to continue treatment for his own sake. Some abusers never do see the benefit to themselves.

- **Sense of well-being is vulnerable**

Some men strike out when the image of masculinity they want to portray feels threatened. Some are very emotionally dependent on their partners and therefore are possessive and jealous. They use violence or the threat of violence to control and contain their partners.

- **Lack of empathy**

Some men seem unable or unwilling to understand the effects their abuse has on their partners. They are preoccupied with concern for themselves. Perhaps this comes from a difficulty identifying their own emotions.

Sometimes the abuse they are inflicting is measured in terms of abuse that has been inflicted on them. An act of violence may not register as "abuse" in comparison to what they themselves have seen or experienced.

'Taking Responsibility' chart used with permission of the Edmonton 'Changing Ways' Program.

- **Jekyll and Hyde**

Friends of an abuser often describe him as quiet, a good provider, a good neighbor and family man. Researchers have observed that the initial impressions of abusers can be misleading.

Abusers may seem socially skilled, friendly and able to communicate well. They may seem to feel guilty and remorseful about their behavior. Over time, however, the feelings of inadequacy, frustration, dependence, denial, and the need to control, will begin to surface.

This contrast helps partially to explain why women stay with abusive husbands. They want to believe in the positive "Dr. Jekyll" and downplay the abusive "Mr. Hyde."

- **"Explosive" and "Controlled" violence**

Though many different circumstances surround abuse, research suggests that many abusers fit into one of two main categories: "Explosive" and "Controlled."

**"Explosive" abusers** tend to blow up in situations where they feel unable to cope. This type of violence is influenced by lack of communication and control skills, and a limited knowledge of other ways to handle conflict. The "explosive" abuser may be a "panic in a corner" person whose violence is a form of "lashing out."

The other category of abuser, the **"controlled" abuser,** has intellectual and social skills, and his violence is not impulsive. His aggression is directed at a particular victim, to achieve a specific result to intimidate and control the victim.

Some researchers say that purely "explosive" aggression is rare. The husband who severely hurts his wife in the heat of an argument probably did mean to hurt her.

Supposedly "out of control" violence or abuse seldom happens in front of witnesses only in private which suggests the timing, at least, is not out of control.

There is a concern that if we suggest that abusive behavior is "out of control," we relieve the abuser of his responsibility for the behavior.

## C. How violence affects women

Unlike abusive men, who often have specific characteristics, abused women do not fall into particular personality categories before the abuse begins.

Being in an abusive situation, however, tends to trigger similar response patterns in the victims of abuse.

Some women leave. But the climate of shame, uncertainty and fear ("a war zone") make an abused woman less likely to take assertive action to value and protect herself, particularly if the woman comes from a family or cultural background that supports the idea of men being dominant.

### 1. "Victim" characteristics are a *result*, not a cause of abuse

After prolonged abuse, women often develop some or all of the following characteristics:

- **Internalize blame**

She may believe that the abuse is her fault and believe her partner when he calls her ugly, stupid or incompetent. She may believe that she would not be abused if she were a better person or performed her role better.

- **Tendency to minimize the seriousness of the abuse**

She may play down the seriousness of the abuse to herself and others because of shame, because she feels responsible for her husband's actions or simply to help herself survive. She may not be ready to deal with the reality of her situation or she may not realize that she does not have to live with violence. She may see no way out.

- **Confusion**

In some relationships the abuse is continuous. In most, however, it happens now and then. There may be long periods of time without violence when the man is a loving partner. These good times give her hope that the violence will not recur. It is this hope, mixed with the pain from the abuse, that results in confusion about what to do.

- **Fear**

Some women's lives are filled with fear. Every day they try to read their partner's mood and anticipate his wants in order to ward off violence.

Some men threaten to hurt their partners even more if they leave or to hurt anyone who offers to help. In reality, many men do follow through on these threats. The women have learned to believe that the abuser will follow through and so women become immobilized by fear.

- **Addiction**

To numb the pain and despair, some women resort to the use of alcohol or drugs, some of which may be prescribed by professionals from whom the women seek help.

## 2. WHY DO WOMEN STAY?

To those outside the relationship, it may be hard to understand why women don't just leave an abusive situation, or why, if they do leave, they often go back to their abusive partner.

The situation is rarely simple. Besides the factors already mentioned (fear, confusion, blaming herself), several other forces may conspire to make it extremely difficult for a woman to leave.

- **Lack of alternatives**

After prolonged abuse, women may have had their self-esteem and their personal support networks destroyed. This, combined with a lack of understanding and support from family and community members, leaves women with few real alternatives.

Leaving their partners, particularly if they are financially dependent on them and have children, can take more personal and material resources than abused women have available to them.

- **Background of abuse**

Girls growing up in violent homes are more likely than other girls to have abusive relationships as adults.

If submission of women has been part of her family or cultural background, a woman may be more likely to stay.

She may believe that as a wife, her husband has the right to dominate her and demand that she meet his needs.

- **Social pressure**

A woman may believe it is her duty to remain in order to keep the family together. Friends, relatives or children may influence her to stay.

- **Hope**

Although they want the violence to stop, abused women may want the relationship to continue. Their hope of better times keeps them in the relationship.

As one abused woman said, "Just when I'd be ready to leave, he would do something nice, and then I would think things might really change."

- **Traumatic bonding**

Two Canadian researchers[1] propose a theory to explain the strong attachment abused women feel for their abusive partners.

The researchers say reasons such as those listed above do not adequately explain why women stay in violent relationships.

For example, two-thirds of women in abusive relationships did *not* grow up in a violent home. Sometimes women stay in abusive relationships even when they are financially independent (i.e., have alternatives) or are in common law relationships (i.e., little social pressure to preserve the family).

The researchers observe that abused women are not the only people who form strong emotional attachments under conditions of mistreatment. For example, hostages have felt "bonded" to their captors; cult members are loyal to leaders who mistreat them.

The researchers use the term "traumatic bonding" to describe strong emotional ties between two persons where one person intimidates and abuses the other at irregular intervals.

These relationships have two common features:

- **Power imbalance** – the abused person perceives herself to be dominated by the other;
- **Intermittent abuse** – the dominant person periodically mistreats the submissive person. But in between mistreatment are times of normal and pleasant behavior.

1 Don Dutton and Susan Lee Painter: "Traumatic Bonding: The Development of Emotional Attachments in Battered Women and Other Relationships of Intermittent Abuse." University of British Columbia.

## Letter from an Abused Woman

I could not have written this letter 10 years ago. I was in the middle of an abusive situation and I didn't even know what I thought or felt any more, let alone being able to write something down.

I lived in it for 12 years. People wonder why I stayed. It's taken me a long time to figure out the reasons. Partly, it was because just about the time I'd think "One more time and that's it, I'm leaving," then he'd be nice. He knew just how far he could push. I wanted our marriage to work out, so when he was nice I'd think maybe this time it would last.

He could be so loving sometimes and so cruel other times. The loving times made me want to stay, and the cruel times ground me down so much I couldn't leave anyway. It took me a long time to admit to myself that I couldn't make him love me enough to quit hitting me.

After you've been beaten, humiliated, put down, shamed and lived in absolute terror for years, you're not a person anymore you're a zombie. It's like I died. I didn't even cry anymore.

My doctor said, "You don't have any places left to bruise. How much longer are you going to put up with this?" But I didn't want to deprive my children of their father. And, after all, I was his wife. I made a lifetime commitment.

Besides, where would I go? When I got married, I had a job and, believe it or not, I had quite a bit of self-confidence. But after 12 years of abuse I had no money, no friends, no place to stay. My family had written me off a long time ago.

He kept telling me I was worthless and I believed him. How could a worthless person like me handle moving, finding new schools and a place to live, and raising kids alone? There was no way I could find a job and support three kids. If only I hadn't let myself become so dependent.

The night I left he had a rifle and was shooting up the house. I was terrified he would murder the children. I grabbed the kids in their pajamas and ran into the street. The neighbor's garage was unlocked and we ran in there.

The neighbors called the police, but I was terrified he'd find us and kill us before the police got there. I felt terrible about putting the neighbors in danger, and humiliated that they had to see us like that.

We stayed that night at the neighbors, but I was terrified the police would let him go and he'd find us. The neighbors helped smuggle the kids and me to an apartment in a different town and they helped me get on social assistance.

All the time I lived there, I was in terror that he'd find us or kidnap the kids after school. I got a restraining order against him, but the police can't guard someone 24 hours a day.

It sounds funny, but I worried about him, all alone in the house without the kids and me to keep him company. And I felt so guilty about leaving him. I don't believe in breaking up a family.

I felt like such a failure as a wife. I'd think about the good times and wonder if I should go back and try it again. Then I'd remember the night we left and know that I could never go back.

The kids were quite a handful. They'd been through a lot and had a hard time adjusting to the new school and the new town. And I was so strung out, I'd be screaming at them one minute and hugging them the next. It was a rough time for all of us.

The best thing that happened to me was meeting another woman who'd been through the same thing. I found out I wasn't crazy and I wasn't worthless and I wasn't the only one. She introduced me to a few other people and gradually I started getting myself put back together. I wish I had met someone like her 10 years earlier.

I've been on my own for six years now. I have a job and the kids are pretty well settled down except my oldest son who has gone back to his father. It hurts that my son believes the violence was my fault, and he treats me like I'm garbage.

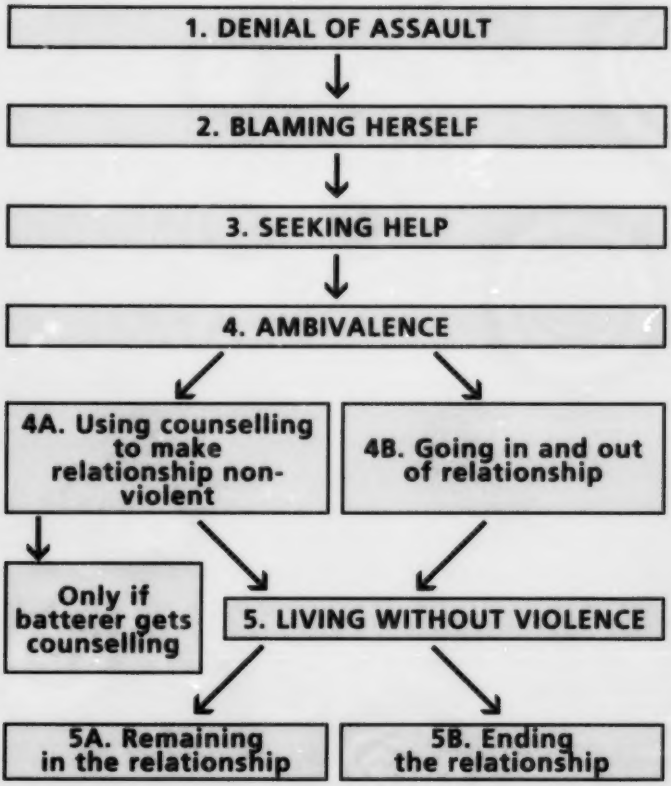
Sometimes I still have nightmares, but mostly I'm doing okay. I'm even starting to like myself. I'm becoming a human being again instead of a zombie and it's kind of nice.

Such intermittent mistreatment has been found to produce strong emotional bonding in both people and animals.

The victim becomes convinced that her well-being is bound up with the well-being of the abuser and therefore she must look after him.

These two conditions are present in domestic violence and may help explain why abused partners choose to stay in an abusive situation.

## 3. Stages in the Abused Woman's Experience


1. DENIAL OF ASSAULT
2. BLAMING HERSELF
3. SEEKING HELP
4. AMBIVALENCE
4A. Using counselling to make relationship non-violent
4B. Going in and out of relationship
Only if batterer gets counselling
5. LIVING WITHOUT VIOLENCE
5A. Remaining in the relationship
5B. Ending the relationship

Frances Woods has identified stages a battered woman goes through, as she lives within the cycle of violence over a period of time. She may need different kinds of help at different stages:

**a. Denial**

An abused woman's most common response to early abuse incidents is to deny there is a problem. Denial is a common human response to any traumatic experience. She may simply not be able to believe the incident happened.

If she grew up with violence, a woman may downplay the incident ("he only shoved me") or may believe that violence is normal. If she did not grow up with violence, her image of "a battered woman" may be someone poorly educated or of low income, and she does not want to perceive herself in that way. She is ashamed and does not want anyone to know.

**b. Blaming herself**

Guilt and turmoil characterize the woman's feelings as she begins to recognize that she is abused. Three factors contribute to her blaming herself:

- **Low self-esteem:** Even if she started with a high level of confidence, being abused makes her doubt her worth. She may begin to believe she deserves the abuse.
- **Others blame her:** Her husband is likely to blame her ("If you'd keep the kids out of the toolbox, I would not have to get so mad.") and she accepts responsibility for his actions. Widespread public opinion that "she must have asked for it" and that women are responsible for what happens in a family reinforce that she is to blame.
- **She needs to feel some power:** As the situation deteriorates and she feels more and more powerless, she can get some sense of controlling the situation if she believes she causes it. The logic goes: "I must provoke him to hit me. If it's me that makes him do it, I could stop provoking him and then he would stop hitting me. I'll try harder."

**c. Seeking help**

Reaching for help is often a negative experience.

Friends and family may not believe her, may tell her she is to blame, or say, "You made your bed, lie in it."

Women may feel that police, lawyers, and the legal system are guided by rules set up to protect the civil rights of the abuser more than the victim.

## Letter From a Friend

I'm really concerned about a couple we know.

When we first met them, they seemed nice enough, although they're very traditional. He works, she stays home – and they make no bones about him being the dominant one. He really runs a tight ship – he gives her an allowance, even checks the mileage on the car. It's not how I'd want to live, but I guess it's really none of my business.

But one day when she was over for coffee she started to cry and tell me about a fight they'd had.

Apparently they'd been at a barbecue and he thought she was flirting with some guy. Poor little mouse, she's so timid she wouldn't be able to flirt if her life depended on it. Anyway, when they got home, he accused her of cheating and he hit her. She told me it wasn't the first time. I just didn't know what to say to her.

Then one night their little girl called our house, scared to death because her father was on a rampage. My husband went over and physically separated the husband and wife, got them calmed down, and stayed until he thought it was safe for him to leave. I'm proud of my husband for trying to help, but I'm not too keen on putting our family in a position where we could get hurt.

I mean, I've told the woman she can come to our house anytime she needs to, but what if he comes after her? And we just don't feel comfortable calling the police or anything, because my husband works with this guy, they're in the same service club – you know how it is.

It's an awful thing to say, but I think she should leave him. I don't know how she'd manage, because she doesn't have a job or any skills and she's so down on herself she probably wouldn't find anyone who'd hire her. But I still think she should leave.

She won't though. I wish I knew how to help.

Rural women may find services simply do not exist.

But rural or urban, even women who have access to services may not find doctors, counsellors or other helpers with an in-depth understanding of her situation. Not all professionals have received specific training to help them recognize or understand family violence.

The belief that violence in the home is a private, family affair may mean potential helpers do not feel they should intervene. Societal values of keeping the family together at all cost may convince her to return.

She may feel she is in a no-win situation. If she leaves, "She didn't try." If she stays, "She must like it."

If a woman reaches out for help and finds none, she will likely be driven back to the violent relationship.

### d. Going in and out of the relationship

Those who work with abused women say 80 to 90 percent of women leave and return to the relationship more than once. ("Traumatic bonding" and other factors we've mentioned may explain this phase.)

This ambivalent state causes misunderstanding, hostility and frustration towards the woman, and may lead potential helpers to give up on her.

During the ambivalent stage, the woman is trying to decide whether to leave or stay in the relationship. She goes back and forth to help her make a decision.

She may try counselling to salvage the relationship. However, few abusive mates will attend counselling voluntarily. They usually require insistence by their partners or the justice system.

Why does she leave? She believes her life is in danger. She fears for her children. She has some hope of supporting herself in the outside world. She has mustered enough self-confidence to believe she can have a satisfying life on her own. When she leaves, she tests if she can survive in the outside environment.

Why does she go back? She wants the relationship (she still cares about him). She believes his promises or his threats. She feels guilty about breaking up the family. Her children may pressure her to return to their friends, their belongings - and their father.

She feels worthless and fears she can't make it on her own. It may seem as if she has no skills, no money, no support and no chance of "getting ahead" by herself. Maybe all those times he told her she couldn't make it without him, he was right.

When she goes back, she tests if the relationship can be changed. She needs to be sure she's given it every chance.

Though nearly all abused women go through the pattern of ambivalence, each does so in her own way. She may leave and return few or many times; she may come to a resolution suddenly or gradually. The ambivalent stage may last for years.

### e. Living without violence

Whether she stays or leaves, the woman will probably need on-going support. Fear, low self-esteem and flashbacks of the violence may plague her.

Some say it takes five years to recover from a violent relationship. Some say it takes forever.

## D. How violence affects children

Children are definitely affected by the violence happening around them.

Often, the children get "caught in the crossfire" and become victims of violence themselves. They may be accidentally pushed or hit during a violent outburst, or one of their parents may inflict intentional damage upon them.

A study conducted at an Edmonton women's shelter showed that:

- 87 per cent of children between the ages of three and eighteen years, who came to the shelter with their mothers, were seriously abused or neglected.
- 30 per cent of the children between the ages of 11 and 18 had been sexually abused.
- 70 per cent of the abused children displayed behavioral and emotional problems severe enough to require treatment.

Even if they are not victims of assault themselves, children are seriously traumatized by living in a violent home.

These children live in fear, waiting for the next violent episode. They feel no safety or security in their own homes, but are too young to seek out alternatives.

Both boys and girls who witness violence quickly learn that violence is an appropriate way to resolve conflict. They may get into fights at school or in the neighborhood.

As they get older, these children are less and less understanding of their mother. Some may begin to verbally or physically abuse her as they have seen their fathers do.

## LETTER FROM THE 17-YEAR-OLD SON OF AN ABUSIVE COUPLE

My parents have been fighting ever since I can remember. They used to have some happy times, but then the fighting would always start again.

When I was a kid, I used to wish the happy times would last, but they never did. After a while I couldn't decide which was worse, the fights or the so-called good times. I wanted to throw up when they were nice to each other. How could she kiss him when he'd been bashing her the day before?

I hate my father. He's the most vicious person I ever met. All the time I was growing up, I lived for the day I would be meaner and tougher than he was. I figured maybe I could be the one to stop him from pushing my mother around. But when I threatened to deck him one day my mother jumped between us and said, "Don't hurt your father."

For 20 years, she has stood by and let him get away with murder. I just don't get it. The worst time was when he beat her so bad she ended up in hospital. The police got her to lay charges, but my Dad cried and the next day she went back to him.

My father hates all of us – no matter what we do we can never please him. He only wants to control us. What really ticks me is that, even though I hate him, I still keep trying to make him proud of me. I want to punch his face in and I want him to be proud of me. It doesn't make any sense.

Nothing makes sense. I know one thing, though I'm not going to have any kids, not ever. I'd probably beat them, too. I went to a doctor to see if I could get a vasectomy, but he told me I'm too young. If I can't do that, I can at least get away from here and never come back.

That's what my sister did. She married a guy seven years older than her, when she was 16. I don't know, though. Sometimes I think she's as weak as my mother, the way she lets him treat her.

Well, let them get killed. My mother's been waiting for it long enough. I plan to be so far away I'll never even hear about it.

Girls in particular may learn that being a victim is inevitable and see no way out of the pattern. As adolescents, girls may begin dating and become involved in relationships which grow to be abusive. They accept threats, controlling behavior and violence from their boyfriends.

Children may live in shame of the hidden violence and be embarrassed by the family secret. Their self-confidence and self-esteem are slowly taken away, along with their confidence in the future.

They may have few opportunities to get involved in activities outside the home, because of their father's (and perhaps their mother's) domination and control.

## E. Clues that abuse may be happening

There is no way to know just by looking whether or not family violence is occurring in a home. There are, however, several indicators or clues that might alert you to possible abuse:

- **A track record of violence** is the most accurate predictor. If someone has assaulted his wife in the past, it is almost certain that such abuse will reoccur when the family is re-united, especially if neither the abuser or other family members have received treatment.
- **A history of abuse in the family of origin.** Those who were abused as children or who grew up in a violent home are more likely than the general population to be victims or perpetrators of family violence.

  One indicator of childhood abuse may be that, as an adult, the person has few childhood recollections.

  Not all children who grow up in violent environments become abusers. Children are more likely to become abusers if:

  - The abuse was accepted or supported by the culture or society;
  - The child felt in some way responsible for causing the violence that he or she "did something wrong."

**Abuser indicators** include:

- *Impulsiveness,* temper tantrums, jealousy, possessiveness, excessive dependence on wife, emotional immaturity;

- *Rigid views of men and women and their roles in society;*
- *Blaming* of children or partner; anger about children or partner; no indication of sensitivity to how the children or partner might feel;
- *Abuse* of drugs or alcohol;
- *A history of suicidal thoughts* or suicide attempts;
- *Characteristics listed earlier,* such as denial of responsibility; vulnerable sense of well-being; lack of empathy.

**Women who are being abused** often present clues or indicators as well. These may include:

- *Low self-esteem;*
- *Health problems* - chronic complaints of poor health; frequent visits to a doctor; sleeping difficulties such as insomnia, violent nightmares;
- *Attitudes about men and women* - rigid view of men's and women's roles; emotional dependence on husband; deference to husband's needs; feeling responsible for his behavior;
- *Emotional or psychological disorders* - severe agitation; anxiety or obvious nervousness; depression; a history of suicidal thoughts or actions;
- *Substance abuse* - tranquilizers and/or alcohol;
- *Confused thinking,* inability to make decisions, lack of eye contact;
- *Suspicion of abusive behavior towards children;*

**Children** who live in an abusive environment sometimes exhibit these behaviors:

- *Aggressive* behavior, or conversely, passive, withdrawing, clinging behavior;
- *School problems* - truancy, poor grades, fighting;
- *Role reversal* - the child parenting the adult;
- *Night time problems* - not able to sleep, nightmares, bedwetting, bedtime problems;
- *Physical complaints* such as headaches, stomach aches, chronic colds, allergies;
- *Crying* hopelessly, or crying very little;

- *Wary* of physical contact; seem to seek safety by sizing up a situation rather than looking to their parents; seem constantly on the alert for danger, asking through words and actions what will happen next;
- *Self-destructive or escapist* behavior (particularly in teenagers) such as running away, drug/alcohol abuse, prostitution, pregnancy, early marriage.

Not all people in abusive homes exhibit these behaviors, and not everyone who exhibits these behaviors is living in an abusive environment.

However, if a number of these indicators are visible, that might be a clue that a relationship has elements of abuse.

## IN SUMMARY

### A. MYTHS AND REALITIES:

MYTH: Abuse is a private matter. No one should disrupt the sanctity of the family.

REALITY: **Families should be protected from an invasion of their privacy except when the interests of individual family members and/or the community are jeopardized. The interests of family members and the community are jeopardized when individuals suffer from threats or the reality of family violence.**

**Physical abuse is assault and assault is a crime, whether it occurs within or outside the home. The belief that family violence is "private" stigmatizes those caught in violent relationships, makes others reluctant to intervene and thus perpetuates the problem.**

MYTH: Wife assault is rare, or we'd hear more about it.

REALITY: **One in eight women are abused by their married or common law partners. In Alberta, that means about 72,000 women are potential victims of assault in their own homes.**

**We don't hear about abusive relationships because both partners hide the facts from others. Their secrecy is made easier because communities find it difficult to believe abuse occurs. Societal values may accept violence in men especially when directed against wives so violent incidents are not recognized as assault.**

MYTH: Women "ask for it." They drive men to violence.

REALITY: **Stress and conflict are part of any relationship. Violence is never an appropriate way to solve a problem. No one deserves to be beaten.**

**In the early stages of a violent relationship, abused women try hard to be and do whatever their husbands want of them, partly in hopes of avoiding the violence. In later stages, as a survival technique, some women may provoke fights, to get the violence over with and reduce the tension.**

MYTH: Abused women like the abuse or they wouldn't stay.

REALITY: **Women stay for varied and complex reasons. They hope to change the man they love, believe the honeymoon promises, feel guilty for breaking up a family, fear his threats, do not have the social or economic resources to make it on their own, and/or have no place to go.**

MYTH: There's no point in helping abused women. They will just go back to the abuse.

REALITY: **During the ambivalent stage, abused women are trying to decide whether to go or stay. Forces pulling them away are as strong as forces pulling toward the relationship. They leave to test if they can survive outside the relationship and return to test if the relationship can change. While frustrating to outsiders, this stage enables women to finally resolve their situation.**

MYTH: Abusers are violent in all their relationships.

REALITY: **Men who believe wives are their property and must be controlled do not have the same belief about other people, so are not necessarily violent towards others. Sometimes outsiders cannot believe the abuse occurs, because the abuser seems quiet and controlled outside his home.**

MYTH: An abusive man is not a loving partner.

REALITY: **The same impulsiveness that leads abusive men to violence carries into the honeymoon stage, when the man may be impulsively loving and affectionate. Such loving behavior often keeps the abused woman in the relationship.**

MYTH: Drinking causes abusive behavior.

REALITY: **Though drinking and physical abuse are often associated, one does not cause the other. The abuser has qualities (low self-esteem, poor impulse control) which are contributing factors to both drinking and violence.**

MYTH: Giving abusers "a taste of their own medicine" will stop the violence.

**REALITY: Using violence to stop violence is a contradiction and it doesn't work. Violence generates more violence. However, several pilot projects in Canada and the U.S. indicate that arresting and prosecuting abusive men does reduce repeat offenses. They need to know their behavior will not be tolerated or condoned.**

MYTH: Nobody can help people in a violent relationships.

**REALITY: Across Alberta, people have broken the cycle of violence in their lives. Most had help from others. Helping those in violent relationships is not easy, but it is possible.**

## B. FAMILY VIOLENCE DOES NOT HAPPEN IN A VACUUM

1. **Wife abuse occurs in all types of families.**
   - It occurs in rich and poor; young and old; in all cultures and in any setting: urban, rural and isolated communities.
2. **What kind of men abuse their wives?**
   - Men who abuse their wives have an extreme need to control or to always win.
   - They believe their wives should submit to their will and desires.
   - They may feel unsure of their masculinity and have difficulty expressing their feelings.
   - They usually blame their wives for causing the violence.
   - They seem unable to understand how other people feel.
3. **How violence affects women**
   - Women who endure prolonged abuse may value the relationship more than their own well-being.
   - They accept blame for the abuse and believe they are inadequate persons.
   - They minimize the seriousness of the abuse and feel they have no alternatives.
   - Their lives are filled with fear and confusion about what to do.

4. **How violence affects children**
   - They may get "caught in the cross-fire" of the violence between their parents, being physically hurt themselves.
   - Children gain a warped perception of what a "normal" family is.
   - Children, particularly boys, may begin to accept violent behavior as a way to solve conflicts. They may even begin to mimic their father's treatment of their mother.
   - Children, particularly girls, may believe that being a victim of violence is inevitable, and allow violent behavior to take place even in their adolescent dating relationships.

5. **The cycle of violence traps families**
   - Eventually, affection happens only during a honeymoon stage – after violence. The absence of other closeness in their lives makes them increasingly dependent on the honeymoon.
   - Isolation: the worse their relationship gets, the more they are cut off from others and the more they are dependent on each other.

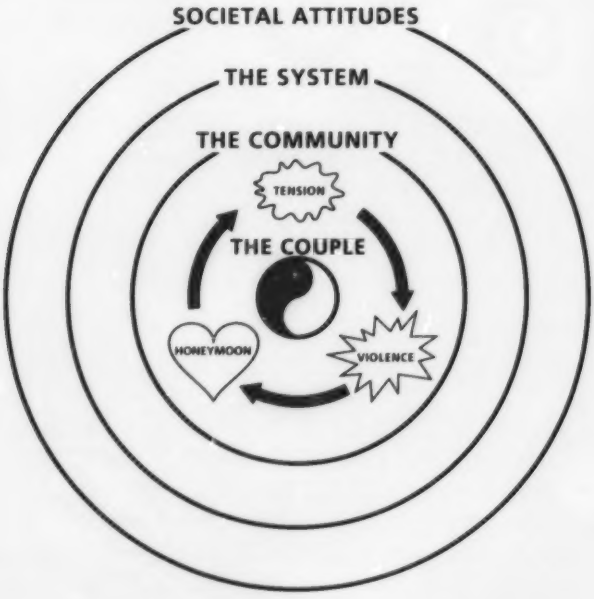
6. **The community may not see the problem or know what to do**
   - Friends and family may feel helpless to do anything.
   - People do not want to know the problem exists; denial helps keep the violence secret.
   - Others may stigmatize the family (gossip, blame, withdrawing from them) which increases the couple's dependency on each other.

7. **Social and legal systems may not help**
   - Some helping professionals do not have in-depth understanding of family violence.
   - The legal system may sometimes seem to protect the civil rights of the assaulter more than the victim.
   - Services may not exist, be accessible, or offer appropriate help.
   - Medical, legal and social services in some communities may be uncoordinated or work at cross purposes with one another.

- Others assume "the system" can handle the problem, so do not get involved.

8. **Society's attitudes and values can contribute to the problem**
   - Belief in the privacy and sanctity of the family prevents the couple from seeking help and stops others from intervening.
   - The couple may accept a belief in keeping the family together at all costs; others may reinforce this.
   - Men's dominance over women is a centuries-old tradition, so a husband's violence against his wife may be condoned, rather than considered assault.
   - Attitudes that accept or glorify violence desensitize us to the reality of abuse in the home.

## Family Violence Does Not Happen in a Vacuum



## A. THE BLAME GAME

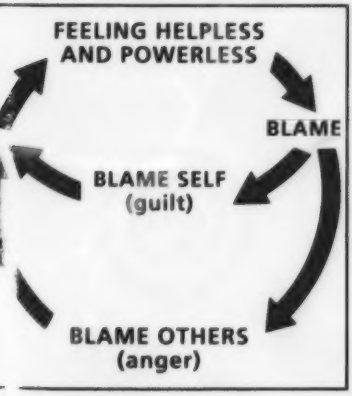
One of the central themes in the cycle of violence is BLAME.

- The abuser BLAMES his wife for provoking him to violence. Or he blames "trouble at work" or "too much to drink" or whatever.
- The abused person BLAMES herself. She feels responsible for the actions of the abuser and thinks "I should have known better."

Ironically, BLAME is also one of the recurring themes of people trying to help:

- We BLAME the abuser for his violent behavior.
- We BLAME the assaulted person for allowing herself to be victimized.
- We BLAME helping professionals for not having more understanding.
- We BLAME the communities and government for not doing more.
- We BLAME society for attitudes that allow family violence.
- We may do as much BLAMING as the people in the cycle of violence!

BLAME is usually a secondary feeling.




Before we started BLAMING each other, we probably feel HELPLESS and POWERLESS to stop the violent situation. Then we turned our helpless and powerless feelings into BLAMING, as shown in the diagram.

NOBODY likes to feel helpless and powerless. Not abused women. Not abusers. Not professional helpers. Not community people.

If we can find someone or something to blame, then we don't feel so helpless. Blaming may give us a small feeling of power. It also helps us avoid responsibility.

## B. VIEWPOINTS: THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO HELP

Sometimes the people trying to "do something" about family violence express some BLAMING. Perhaps they too feel HELPLESS and POWERLESS.

But if we could talk to each other about how we *really* feel (under the blaming) we might find many of the same feelings. It would be harder to blame each other if we understood each other better.

And if we understood, we might find ways to HELP one another. The abused, the abusers, and the helpers could stop feeling powerless and helpless and could get on with making some changes.

The viewpoints that follow are composites of what real Alberta people said as this booklet was being developed.

This is what we might say if we really talked to each other.

## A Doctor's Viewpoint

I've heard people criticize doctors because we don't "do more" for battered women. Let me tell you how it is.

When a woman walks into my office or the emergency department and I find out she's been injured by her husband, it makes me wish I was somewhere else.

You know why? Because I know that after we patch her up she's going to go right back into the same situation. No matter what I say or do, women keep going back to men who abuse them. I can patch up their bodies, but I can't heal their relationships.

I've come to the conclusion that at some level these women must be so emotionally beaten down they start to feel like they don't deserve any better.

Their self-esteem is usually so low and their problems so deep-seated that I'm not sure any M.D. can help them. In a way, it almost seems like the husband and wife need each other.

If the husband has an alcohol problem and we can do something about that, sometimes we can get the situation turned around. But if he hits her when he's sober, I've never yet seen a case where we could get him to stop the violence. Her only way out is to leave, but she keeps going back.

At one time, people expected doctors to heal their bodies. In the last few years, it seems we're also supposed to heal people's lives. I wish I could. But I know of no prescription or surgical procedure that can make people like themselves.

Please don't misunderstand me. It's not that I don't care. If I didn't care, it wouldn't bother me so much. I would help them if I could. The trouble is, I don't know how.

My training was in anatomy and physiology – in the science of medicine. I know what makes physical bodies work. But nothing in my training taught me a "cure" for problems that are not just physical.

Some of my newer colleagues seem to have more training in the non-physical problems of their patients. That's probably a good thing.

## A Police Officer's Point of View

From my point of view, the most important message is this: today's police officers are far better equipped to deal with family violence than they have ever been before.

When I started in 1968, we were trained in the law and police procedures, but we had no training about family violence, and we did not receive training in interpersonal or mediation skills.

That's all changed. There's a whole different viewpoint towards family violence. As a society, we have decided we are no longer going to tolerate family abuse. And our police force is aggressively pursuing the issue of domestic violence.

At least four factors are helping us deal with family violence – criminal law, training, technology and our work in the community.

Changes in Canada's criminal laws related to assault (and family violence *is* assault) give police officers more authority to act. It is no longer the responsibility of the victim to lay charges. If there is reasonable evidence of assault, police officers have authority to lay charges.

In our detachment, we have an average of 70 domestic calls every week. That's a lot.

But we did a major study and we've developed guidelines for dealing with domestic violence.

Our department has a senior officer who specializes in family violence cases, who reviews every file. When he identifies chronic families, he can put in motion several kinds of follow-up support.

This officer will work with the coordinator and coordinate with outside agencies like Social Services and Mental Health. The police coordinator and agency people sometimes work with defense lawyers and the court system.

The point is, we're working together in a coordinated way to take a problem-solving approach so we can alleviate the situation.

That means the response officers who handle domestic calls are more comfortable because they know the file will be reviewed and there will be follow up support.

Both the street-level officers and the managers now have better training in the area of family violence. In fact, police officers across Alberta have attended training sessions – some sponsored by the Solicitor General's department.

Training has helped us understand family violence and given us specific techniques for how to respond and follow up on the cases we see.

Our technology is better too. Of course officer safety is a concern. With our advances in technology, the person who dispatches the call is able to give the responding officer a great deal of information to assess and evaluate the situation before the officer arrives on the scene.

Officers have mobile data terminals in their cars, too, so they can access all kinds of information before they go into a situation. Our officers also carry portable radios, so they can have instant contact from any location – a home, an alley, wherever.

New technology also affects the number of calls we get. For instance, even children know the "911" number. We get calls from children who say, "My mom and dad are fighting," and we can hear the background noise.

With the law, training, technology, and our work with the community, we think we are making a difference.

Not all police forces are at the same level. Some have better programs in place than others. But I see the 1990's as a time when police departments are moving ahead, getting specialized training, improving technology, and working with other groups in the community.

We believe family violence can be prevented, but it's going to take the efforts of all us together.

We all have a role to play. And we better play it, because family violence affects us all, at every level of society.

Sometimes people talk about how difficult domestic violence is – there is a certain threat level for police officers.

It *is* difficult – we know our job inherently has some danger – but we are professionals.

Our police officers are cool, professional, well trained, with the technical and administrative skills to problem-solve this situation.

Whether it's in a city or a rural area, the police can play a really positive role.

Sure there is more to do. But when I think of how much things have improved even in the past few years, I know we're moving in the right direction.

We intend to be part of the solution.

## A Shelter Worker's Viewpoint

We pick up the pieces. We see the pain on a daily basis. We know the implications of battering and find it hard to understand why others don't take it seriously.

We see the fear of the women and children walking into the shelter, not knowing what to expect, feeling ashamed that it has come to this. They're afraid they'll be judged one more time, that someone will ask, "Why did you stay?" or "What did you do to cause the problem?"

We work with women whose self-esteem has been taken away for many years through put-downs, name calling and being told they're no good. We talk to children who have crawled into a closet to get away from the horror.

We know the women and children will have trouble talking. We ask questions and let them take their time. Quite often it's the first time they've shared this deeply hidden secret. They learned when they tried to share in the past not to share anymore.

We let them cry or do what they need to do. You see, part of living in an abusive situation is to cut off all feeling. So when they do start to share, it's hard.

We ask what they need. Often it's safety. There are security measures here, and they feel safe. That makes a big difference.

We explain what the shelter is about and what we can offer. We help them understand abuse – they've lived through it but they may not understand it – and we listen without judging. We give them information about their choices – legal, financial, housing, counselling.

We help them look at their decisions, but we give them control of deciding what to do – whether to go back, to stay away, or move to a different town. They've been controlled by battering for so long, we help them understand that it's their life and they can make the decisions.

When they go back, we know it's because they have to. They want to make sure they've done all they can. If they have to come to us again it's even harder for them, but we try to let them know we understand. It's okay for them to come back to us.

Our centre has a child care worker and that takes some of the pressure off the mothers. The children are in transition, too. We have babies to teenagers, and they're usually confused when they arrive. Many just don't know what's happening. They're usually afraid of what will happen to them, afraid of being in a strange place, and afraid of what Dad will do when he finds they're gone.

We've two-year-olds sobbing, trying to be quiet because they're afraid someone will hit them if they cry. We've seen a 10-year-old girl with gonorrhea she got from her stepfather. The stories of physical abuse are hard, but sexual abuse is even harder, because we know the ramifications, how hard it will be for them to work through.

Children have been told they were hit because they were bad. They think that when Dad hits Mom, she's been "bad", too.

When they find out we don't hit children here, they're surprised. They test us in the first few days, to see if we really stick to it. And they test their mother, too. They often don't have much faith or respect in her ability to take charge of things – she's never been allowed to take charge before.

We hope the children will remember this place where nobody is hit, and it will help. It's hard for us to be sad on a day-to-day basis, because of the children. There's always a hug or a mess or some mischief going on. The children help keep the atmosphere normal and warm and humorous.

When we hold public education events there are always people in the crowd that are ready to hate the man. But we know he learned it somewhere. We weren't there as a society when he needed to learn other ways.

Our centre has a follow-up program for women and a support group that runs for several months. I wish there were more groups like this one.

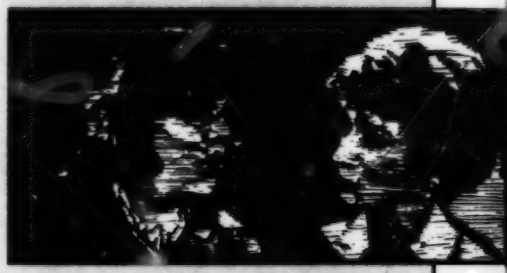
We also need treatment programs to help men change their behavior. In the last few years we've learned more about effective treatment approaches for men and more treatment is beginning to be available. In our community, we've had great co-operation with the police and the courts to make it more likely the men will get into treatment. Without treatment for the men, we'll just keep patching up the women and children, but the problem won't go away.

## A Counsellor's Point of View

There was nothing in my formal training to help me work with abused or abusing persons. When I started as a well-trained but inexperienced counsellor, I had no inkling of how to recognize the signs of violence, or what treatment regimes would help in preventing another violent episode.

Despite my absence of background, abusive couples were referred to me. I searched the professional literature of the time and found almost nothing to help me deal with these couples effectively.

My background and my own beliefs led me to deal with the total family, rather than one individual, so I viewed abusive relationships as a "couple" problem and tried to use couple counselling techniques that had worked in other counselling situations. I now know this approach was not only ineffective, it may even have been dangerous.



More research is available now. A well-known therapist who works with abusers was asked "Why do men beat their wives?" His answer: "Because they can."

The missing piece in my "family" approach was the dynamics of power. Among other things, abusive relationships involve an imbalance of power.

Interestingly, it is often easier for abusers to admit their abusive behavior than it is for them to admit the abuse of power. But we've concluded that abusers will keep abusing as long as they can get away with it.

We understand more about the abused partner now, too. At one time we thought that the personality of the abused person led her to be attracted to a potential abuser. We also took into account that many abused persons were subject to social pressures to keep the family intact, or had no money and therefore could not leave an abusive situation.

But that did not explain why unmarried women stayed with abusive partners or why financially well-off women stayed. There had to be something else going on.

Then we noticed that women who had suffered from long-term abuse by their partner had characteristics in common with victims of hijackings, kidnappings or rape. In certain circumstances, victims become "bonded" or develop a strong emotional attachment to their captor. We are beginning to

understand that the abused person's common characteristics – low self-esteem, loyalty, compliance, guilt, loss of identity, and so on – appear to be the *result* rather than the cause of long-term abuse.

I've learned not to ask about abuse if the partners are seeing me together. They will lie – or if she admits the abuse is happening, she will pay for it later.

So where does that leave us counsellors? I still believe strongly in the value of total family therapy, but *not* when abuse is involved. Where there is abuse, we deal with the partners separately.

The abuser needs to be separated from his family – by legal means if necessary – to help him understand that neither the law nor his family will accept violence. He also must be separated from them so he cannot manipulate or intimidate other family members. He needs to understand that he is responsible for his own behavior.

This forced separation, combined with group treatment where he looks at abuse of power and learns more acceptable ways to express anger, appear to be more effective than anything else we've tried.

It's still a dangerous situation though. We've seen that when a family is reunited, the physical violence may stop but there is an increase in emotional abuse and intimidation. Sometimes if the physical violence starts again, families will lie. They are so ashamed, they think they've failed. They don't want to admit – or they're terrified – to admit the problem has not gone away.

Abusive families are among the most difficult of clients, but we are learning more about how to work with them.

The abused partner needs emotional support, such as self-help groups for those who have been abused, to help her understand she is not responsible for her partner's behavior, and to rebuild her self-image. She needs help if she is to maintain the strength and resolve not to accept more violence, and not to be intimidated by other strategies to hook her guilt, fear or unrealistic optimism.

The children often do not need counselling so much as someone to help them express their feelings. Play therapy and other techniques are useful in this regard.

Children may need help to understand they neither caused nor deserved the violence. They may also need help to learn non-violent methods of behavior for themselves. And they need some plain old fashioned stability, affection and kindness.

## A Lawyer's Viewpoint

I look at family violence from two viewpoints, professional and personal.

As a professional, I find it difficult to deal with the issues surrounding family violence. Although it's changing, the legal system often does not treat wife abuse as the serious issue that it is. When a husband assaults his wife, the attitude often is, "Oh, Dick and Jane are at it again."

In theory there are mechanisms to protect the wife – restraining orders and court sentences. But often the judge seems to feel that appearing in court is enough deterrent to a violent husband, and so wrist-slapping is all that happens. The woman is humiliated – and still in danger of being beaten again. If the same man assaulted a stranger, he'd go to jail.

From a personal perspective, I don't ask any more why the woman is leaving – or not leaving. I give legal advice, but the client makes the decisions. I've learned to let the client come and go as often as necessary. If it's 15 times, I'll be there.

I just wish the women could hang on to the self-esteem they were born with. They have to believe they don't deserve abuse before they will allow themselves to do anything about it.

I'm a specialist in matrimonial law, and I prefer this type of practice. A lot of lawyers don't because the emotion bothers them. If you're going to be a good matrimonial lawyer, you have to think about what's best for the whole family and not worry about who's going to get the refrigerator.

A big part of being a matrimonial lawyer is to take a counselling approach, to shield clients from unnecessary legal nonsense as much as possible, but still give them the information they need to make decisions.

We're making progress. In the past few years, judges and lawyers are certainly taking wife abuse more seriously.

I wish the legal profession could work together more on the problems of family violence. As long as we just keep blaming each other nothing will be gained. In the end, we are each responsible.

## C. Changing the Cycle

Changing the cycle of family violence is a long-term process. Our society is beginning the process by becoming less tolerant of abuse and more likely to intervene on behalf of abused women and their children.

Meanwhile, there are things we can do now.

### If you are in an abusive relationship

Here are a few suggestions if you are trying to free yourself from a life of violence:

- **Don't underestimate the danger.**

Don't be lulled into underestimating the danger that you and your children face.

Statistics and research show that the violence gets more severe over time.

You could be killed.

- **Make a get-away plan.**

The violence gets worse – it never gets better. If you are not ready or able to leave the situation permanently, at least take some precautions for your own safety and the safety of your children.

It may not seem fair that you, and not your spouse, will be forced to leave your home when violence happens. You're right, it's not fair. But it may be the only way to keep yourself and your children safe.

Have an escape plan. Whenever possible, tuck a few dollars away in a place where it won't be found, but where you can get at it. Keep a set of car keys where you can get them easily and quickly. If you can, make an arrangement with a friend or neighbor or women's shelter to provide a safe place for you or your children in an emergency.

- **Care for yourself.**

Be kind to yourself as you cope.

Remember, you don't deserve to be abused. You are not responsible for another person's abusive behavior.

Appreciate the strengths you must have to have survived and coped. When you wish you had done something differently, be as forgiving to yourself as you would to another person in a difficult situation.

- **Ask for help.**

Whether you are staying in the relationship or attempting to make it on your own, you need help. Don't be afraid to ask for it.

- **Emotional support** can be found from friends (if you have any available) or from the staff of a women's shelter or other facility. If you're not interested in staying in a shelter, you can still drop in to ask for advice or telephone for assistance.
- **A counsellor** might also provide emotional support. If you choose counselling, be sure to look for a counsellor who understands wife assault and is able to deal with it.

  Not all counsellors are trained in this area. If the counsellor says you and your partner have a "communication problem" or suggests counselling you and your partner together, this is not the right person for you to be seeing.
- **Physical safety** can be found at a shelter, a hotel or the home of someone you trust.
- **Legal advice** and assistance is available. If you can't afford to pay the fees, Legal Aid may assist.
- **Financial assistance** may be available on a short or long-term basis through Alberta Family and Social Services. They may be able to help you get into a training program to improve your job skills.
- **You can help the police.**

In Alberta, all police departments have been instructed to take responsibility for pressing charges against an abuser.

If you or someone else report the crime to the police, and if there is enough evidence, the police will take charge of the legal process. Your evidence in court will be a big help.

Wife assault is a crime. Often it takes the threat of prosecution or being separated from his family to make an abuser agree to get help.

- **Encourage your partner to get counselling.**

Whether or not you have been through a court process, encourage your partner to get counselling.

Here again, choose your counsellor carefully. There are programs specifically designed for abusive men. Some are listed in the resource directory at the back of this book. Most women's shelters also know of programs in their own areas that might be able to assist.

### If you are concerned about someone you know

If you want to help someone else who is in a battering relationship, there are a few things you might consider.

- **Be supportive.**

A woman in an abusive relationship has been the brunt of devastating emotional and physical abuse. If she talks to you about it, she's looking for someone who can accept what she's been through.

Try not to be shocked or judgemental at what you hear. If you say things like, "How could you stand it?" or "I would've left that bum years ago," she will think you are judging her and that only makes it harder for her to come to you.

- **Understand her need to come and go from the relationship.**

Women who are trying to free themselves from violence have been victims for a long time. They may still want their marriage to work, for reasons we have talked about earlier. Understand their need to go back to the relationship – to test if it can work without violence.

- **Help her be aware of the options.**

You can help by assisting a woman to find out what community services, resources or agencies might be accessible to her. Be careful to avoid telling the woman what to do, however. She's been controlled long enough – it's time for her to make her own decisions.

### If you are a professional

As a community professional, you may suspect you have clients who are victims of wife assault.

- **Know what to look for.**

Familiarize yourself with some of the characteristics and indicators of abusive relationships.

- **Know what questions to ask.**

Chances are, the abused woman is not going to admit her secret. But if you recognize the signs and know what questions to ask, (*not* when her partner is present) you may be able to help her speak out.

- **Help clients understand.**

Women in violent situations are often unaware of what's happening in their lives. You can help them to see how the cycle of violence works, and let them know options are available.

## If you want your community to help reduce family violence

If you want to initiate some action in your community to help abused women and their families – or other people affected by family violence – please read another booklet in this series, *Breaking the Pattern: How Alberta Communities Can Help.*

This booklet is available free of charge from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. (See inside front cover for address).

* * * * *

**If you are in an abusive relationship, we hope this booklet has helped you to understand what is happening to you. We hope that increased understanding will help to empower you so that you will feel more able to make decisions about your life and what is best for you.**

**If you know someone in an abusive relationship, we hope that you now have a better understanding of your friend or relative's situation.**

**If you are a professional whose work may bring you in contact with abusive families, we hope this booklet has helped you understand the dynamics of family violence or has reinforced what you already know. You may also want to share this booklet with clients or their family and friends, to help them better understand the situation.**

**If you need more information about resources for helping abused women, please refer to the following pages for a brief listing of what is available in Alberta communities.**

## A. SHORT AND LONGER-TERM SHELTER FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Women in abusive relationships sometimes need places outside their homes to go for safety and support. Sometimes the women have children who need refuge as well.

To meet those needs, a variety of places operate in Alberta communities.

**1. Short term emergency accommodation for women alone**

McDougall House
10803 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton T5G 0C3
426-1409

Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre
10007 - 105A Avenue
Edmonton T5H 0M5
423-5302

**2. Short term emergency accommodation for women (children welcome)**

**Calgary**

Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter
P.O. Box 52051
Edmonton Trail N.E.
Calgary T2E 8K9
232-8718 (office)
297-8343 (crisis)

Young Women's Christian Association:
Sheriff King Home
320-5th Avenue S.E.
Calgary T2G 0E5
263-1550 (office)
266-0707 (crisis)

**Camrose**

Camrose Women's Shelter
Box 1405
Camrose T4V 1X3
672-1035

**Edmonton**

Edmonton Women's Shelter, WIN House I and II
Room 4, 11602 - 40 Street
Edmonton T5W 2K6
471-6709 (office)
479-0058 (crisis)
(must have children)

**Fort McMurray**

Unity House
Box 6165
Fort McMurray T9H 4W1
743-4691 (office)
743-1190 (crisis)

**Grand Centre**

Dr. Margaret Savage Women's Crisis Centre
Box 419
Grand Centre T0A 1T0
594-5095 (office)
594-3353 (crisis)

**Grande Prairie**

Odyssey House
10123 - 107 Avenue
Grande Prairie T8V 1M1
532-2672

**Hinton**

Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women
Box 6401
Hinton T7V 1X7
865-4389 (office)
1-800-661-0937 (crisis)

**Lethbridge**

Harbour House
604 - 8 Street South
Lethbridge T1J 2K1
329-0088 (office)
320-1881 (crisis)

**Lloydminster**

Interval Home
Box 1523
Lloydminster, Sask.
S9V 1K5
875-0966

**Medicine Hat**

Medicine Hat
Women's Shelter
631 Prospect Drive S.W.
Medicine Hat T1A 4C2
529-1091

**Red Deer**

Central Alberta Women's
Emergency Shelter
Box 561
Red Deer T4N 5G1
346-5643

**Sherwood Park**

Strathcona Shelter Society:
A Safe Place
Box 3204
Sherwood Park T8Z 2A6
464-7232 (office)
464-7233 (crisis)

**Peace River**

Peace Country Crisis
Association
624-2244 (crisis)
(to open 1991)

**3. Short term refuges**

The following organizations provide emergency refuge for one to three days for women and their children in crisis situations.

**Edmonton**

Young Women's
Christian Association
10305 - 100 Avenue
Edmonton T5J 3C8
423-9922

**Fairview**

Fairview and District
Women's Centre
Box 1194
Fairview T0H 1L0
835-2120

**Grande Cache**

Grande Cache Transition
House Society
Box 1242
Grande Cache T0E 0Y0
827-5055

**High Level**

High Level Safe Home
Network
Box 396
High Level T0H 1Z0
926-3899
(office and day crisis)
926-3791
(after hours crisis)

**Peace River**

Peace Country Crisis
Association
Box 5204
Peace River T8S 1R8
624-3466 (office)
624-2244
(crisis – until 2 a.m.)

**St. Paul**

St. Paul and District
Crisis Association
Box 2537
St. Paul T0A 3A0
645-5132 (office)
645-5195 (crisis)

**Whitecourt**

Wellspring Association
Family Resource Centre
24-hour Crisis/Information
and Satellite Shelter
Box 681
Whitecourt T0E 2L0
778-6209 (office and crisis)

Alberta Family and Social Services will assist women in crisis to find emergency accommodation. For information, contact any Family and Social Services District Office or phone Emergency Social Services at 427-3390. Phone numbers and locations are listed in telephone directories under Government of Alberta.

**4. Second Stage Housing**

Second Stage Housing provides ongoing safety and support for up to six months for abused women and their children, to assist them in making the transition to independent living.

Secure accommodation, individual counselling, support groups, life skills programs, child care services, information and referral to community resources are available.

Access is usually through a referral from a women's shelter.

**Calgary**

Discovery House,
Calgary Family Support
Society
Box 3532, Station B
Calgary T2M 4M2
277-0718

**Edmonton**

Wings of Providence Society
P.O. Box 266
Main Post Office
Edmonton T5J 2J1
426-4985

## B. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance may be available through Alberta Family and Social Services. District Offices are listed in the telephone directory under Government of Alberta.

## C. LEGAL RESOURCES

**1. Legal advice**

**Legal Aid Society of Alberta** provides legal services for people who cannot afford to hire a lawyer privately. Payment is arranged over a long term. Offices located in:

Calgary
Edmonton
Fort McMurray
Grande Prairie
Lethbridge
Medicine Hat
Peace River
Red Deer
St. Paul
Wetaskiwin

Check your local telephone directory for phone numbers.

**Calgary Legal Guidance**
100, 615 MacLeod Trail
Calgary T2G 4T8
234-9266

Provides free legal advice to low income, legally disadvantaged people who do not meet the eligibility requirements for Legal Aid and who otherwise could not afford the services of a lawyer.

**Law Society of Alberta**
**Lawyer Referral Service**
1-800-661-1095

Provides the names of lawyers suitable to the needs of the caller.

**2. Legal information**

**Dial-a-Law**
Calgary 234-9022
Other locations
1-800-332-1091

Provides access by telephone to pre-taped legal information.

**Legal Resource Centre**
10049 - 81 Avenue
Edmonton T6E 1W7
432-5732

Provides legal education for the public through material in the resource centre and public presentations.

**Student Legal Services of Edmonton**
114 Law Centre
University of Alberta
Edmonton T6G 2H5
492-2226

Provides family law information and assistance.

**3. Printed legal information**

*Law and the Abused Woman, 1990*

Prepared by the Calgary YWCA Support Centre and the Junior League of Calgary with funding assistance from the Alberta Law Foundation.

Available from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

*Battered Women and the Law,* 1986

Prepared by and available from:

Student Legal Services
of Edmonton
114 Law Centre
University of Alberta
111 Street and 88 Avenue
Edmonton T6G 2H5

## D. INFORMATION ABOUT COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RESOURCE MATERIAL

*Directory of Family Violence Initiatives*

This directory lists Alberta organizations and services that have some direct involvement with family violence.

The directory is available from:

Office for the Prevention
of Family Violence
11th Floor, South Tower
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton T5J 3E4
422-5916

*Family Violence Bibliography*

This 45-page collection lists books, journals and magazine articles on all types of family violence including wife abuse.

It was updated in 1988 and is available for $2.50 from

The Vanier Institute of
the Family
Suite 300
120 Holland Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0X6
(613)722-4007

*Lists of Family Violence Publications*

Office for the Prevention
of Family Violence
11th Floor, South Tower
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton T5J 3E4
422-5916

National Clearinghouse
on Family Violence
744 Brooke Claxton Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa K1A 1B5
1-800-267-1291

Education Wife Assault
427 Bloor Street West
Toronto M5S 1X7
(416)968-3422